



The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services

FY 2020 – FY 2023

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

May 15, 2019



State of Alaska

Department of Health
and Social Services

Alaska Commission
on Aging

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1. Executive Summary

The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services

Since the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services was last updated four years ago, the population of seniors age 60 and older in Alaska has increased by around 20,000 people.¹ This trend will continue through 2025, when Alaska's senior population age 60 and older population will again increase by 22,000 to the projected peak of 140,000 people age 60 and older.² At the same time, the State of Alaska resources for funding senior services and housing are flat or declining. Alaska must plan for how to continue to provide services for active seniors, those needing assistance to live independently, and those with more complex medical and social needs. People are living longer and the numbers of seniors with dementia, chronic health conditions, and behavioral health needs are also increasing proportionately. The population age 80 and older, who often require the most support to live independently, will almost triple over the next 30 years. Some people will be able to age well at home with support from family, friends or paid caregivers. Others will require and benefit from community resources such as senior centers, meals, respite, transportation that are often funded by a combination of grants, Medicaid, and other community contributions. Investments that support a high quality of life for seniors and elders also help to avoid costs associated with preventable circumstances such as falls, poor nutrition, inactivity, or medication errors.

The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services is the roadmap that guides the provision of senior services in Alaska over the next four years. It provides a comprehensive plan for senior services including meals, transportation, homemaker and family caregiver, safety and protection, adult day services, senior housing, vocational training, legal assistance, the Senior Voice newsletter and more. This plan also satisfies a federal requirement for all states receiving federal funds under the Older Americans Act for their senior programs and services. It includes a vision statement, a core set of goals, objectives, strategies, performance measures, and an intrastate funding formula for federal funds and the State of Alaska General Fund. Through this effort, the Alaska Commission on Aging aims to keep pace with senior needs through planning, advocacy, public awareness efforts, and collaboration with all organizations focused on the well-being of older Alaskans.

Vision

The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY 2020-2023 builds on strong partnerships to provide high-quality, culturally-sensitive, accessible services for Alaskans 60 and above to live healthy, independent, meaningful lives in the place and manner of their choosing.

Planning Process

The State of Alaska constitutes a single planning and service area under the terms of the Older Americans Act. The Alaska Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) is the State Unit on Aging. The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) conducts planning and advocacy for the DHSS. The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services is the product of a 15-month process starting in February 2018 that included seven facilitated conversations with seniors in Wrangell, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Nome, Shishmaref, and a targeted session for people aging with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These sessions included assessment questions to identify

¹¹ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, Published in 2019

² Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Projections, Published in 2018

opportunities and gaps in services for seniors in Alaska communities. The planning process also included a senior and a provider survey to identify the top issues of concern to seniors. The plan builds from the vision and work conducted as part of the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY2016-19. The ACoA convened an advisory committee in April 2019 to guide the process and discuss changes and updates to the plan (Appendix F). At the direction of the advisory committee, the plan contains the same vision and principles as the previous plan, with an updated set of goals and objectives.

A subcommittee was formed to review and revise the intrastate funding formula, which was updated mid-planning cycle for FY2017-2019. The advisory committee reviewed and modified the internal draft in May of 2019 in preparation for the public review draft. The public review draft was posted for public comment for 10 days, with an advisory committee meeting to address how public comments would be incorporated in the final plan. The ACoA submitted the final plan document to the Governor, Commissioner of DHSS, and U.S. Administration on Community Living/Administration on Aging in June 2019. The plan takes effect July 1, 2019.

Plan Format

Per the Administration on Aging (AoA) Guidance on the Development and Submission of State Plans, Amendments and Intrastate Funding Formulas (hereafter AoA State Plan Guidance document), this section is limited to 30 pages. Supporting background information is provided through Appendices. The narrative section of the plan includes:

- **Chapter 1: Background and Context** includes a summary of the demographics and needs assessment activities and key findings. Appendix A provides additional results from the senior survey, a provider survey, and seven senior/elder listening sessions.
- **Chapter 2: Focus Areas** include a description of the programs and services available to older Alaskans, those paid for by Older Americans Act and the State of Alaska funding. The focus areas include: The Older Americans Act (OAA) Core Programs, Administration for Community Living (ACL) Discretionary Grants, Participant-Directed/Person-centered Planning, and Elder Justice Focus. This chapter includes a crosswalk that details which goals, objectives and measures relate to each focus area.
- **Chapter 3: Key Issues** summarizes the key issues related to senior services using results from the needs assessment, demographic analysis, and advisory committee input.
- **Chapter 4: Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures** respond to the key issues and focus areas and provide Alaska's senior agencies, advocates, and service providers a shared focus for the next four years. The six goals include:
 1. Promote healthy aging and provide access to comprehensive and integrated health care.
 2. Ensure seniors are financially secure.
 3. Protect vulnerable seniors from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation.
 4. Ensure seniors have access to quality, affordable, accessible, safe, and appropriate housing, including senior housing, across the continuum of care.
 5. Promote opportunities for meaningful aging, intergenerational connectivity, and civic engagement.
 6. Provide quality and affordable home and community-based long-term support services to provide seniors with the highest quality of life.
- **Chapter 5: Outcomes and Performance Measure Related to Focus Areas** describes how the outcomes and measures identified in the previous chapter relate to the four focus areas identified by the AoA State Plan Guidance document.

- **Chapter 6: Quality Management** includes a quality management strategy for the FY2020-2023 period, including data collection to assess ongoing program implementation, remediation of problem areas, and continuous improvement of programs and services.

There are a variety of appendices included with this state plan to provide detailed information to support the plan document. **Appendix A** summarizes the needs assessment activities and analysis, which form the foundation for the goals and objectives of this plan. **Appendix B** includes a description of the intrastate funding formula selected for this state plan. The formula is used for the distribution of state and federal funds to ensure funding priority is given to areas with the most economic and social need; factors for the formula include total senior (60+) population, advanced age (80+), minority status, low income, and rural residency. **Appendix C and D** include Assurances and Information Requirements under the Older Americans Act. **Appendix E** summarizes demographic data about Alaska seniors. **Appendix F** includes a list of the Advisory Committee members and their affiliations. **Appendix G** describes the programs provided for seniors by the State of Alaska. **Appendix H** summarizes the continuum of care for long-term services and supports. **Appendix I** summarizes the Older Americans Act.

Next Steps

Public and private partners will continue to work together on state plan implementation and ongoing needs assessment. As the new plan takes effect on July 1, 2019, implementation through key leads for each performance measure will be the new focus. The Advisory Committee will also revisit the funding formula methodology, specifically the definition of rural in 2021 with the data from the 2020 Census.



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2. Context

This section provides a description of the Alaska State Unit on Aging and partner agencies, coordination of existing plans, demographic trends, and needs assessment activities and findings. The Advisory Committee used the needs assessment findings and relevant planning efforts to develop the plan.

Description of the Alaska State Unit on Aging

State of Alaska

The State of Alaska constitutes a single planning and service area under the terms of the Older Americans Act. In Alaska, the State Unit on Aging is the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS). Older Americans Act Title III and some Title VII services are provided to seniors through the DHSS Division of Senior & Disabilities Services (SDS). The Division of Senior & Disabilities Services (SDS) is responsible for the administration of home and community-based programs for seniors and individuals with developmental and physical disabilities for the State of Alaska. Senior home and community grant-funded services provide expanded services for older adults who need assistance to remain independent, but who do not qualify for other publicly funded programs and are intended for individuals who are at risk for institutionalization and wish to remain in their own homes. Programs administered by SDS include Adult Protective Services, General Relief Assisted Living program, Senior and Disabilities Community-based Grant programs, Community Developmental Disabilities Grant program, Medicaid Home and Community-based Waiver programs, Medicaid Personal Care Assistant program, Medicaid Community First Choice program, Medicare Information Office and Senior Medicare Patrol, Aging and Disability Resource Center program, and the Nursing Facility Transition program.

The Alaska Commission on Aging, also an agency within DHSS, coordinates the planning function of the State Unit on Aging, in addition to advocating for senior needs to the state legislature and leading public awareness campaigns on civic health, behavioral health, and civic engagement issues.

Older Americans Act Title V services are provided through the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) Program within the Department of Labor & Workforce Development. The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO), which carries out the Title VII long-term care ombudsman services, is located within the Department of Revenue.

Alaska Commission on Aging

Since 1982, the Alaska Commission on Aging, an agency within the Department of Health & Social Services, has served to ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans by addressing their needs through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation.

As part of its commitment to the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY 2016–FY 2019, the Commission held one annual implementation meeting with agency partners, to identify accomplishments related to the plan's goals and objectives and to plan further activities. In 2018, the Commission began coordinating planning activities for the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY 2020–FY 2023 with consumers and agency representatives. The plan fulfills a requirement of the Older Americans Act.

Coordination with Existing Planning Efforts

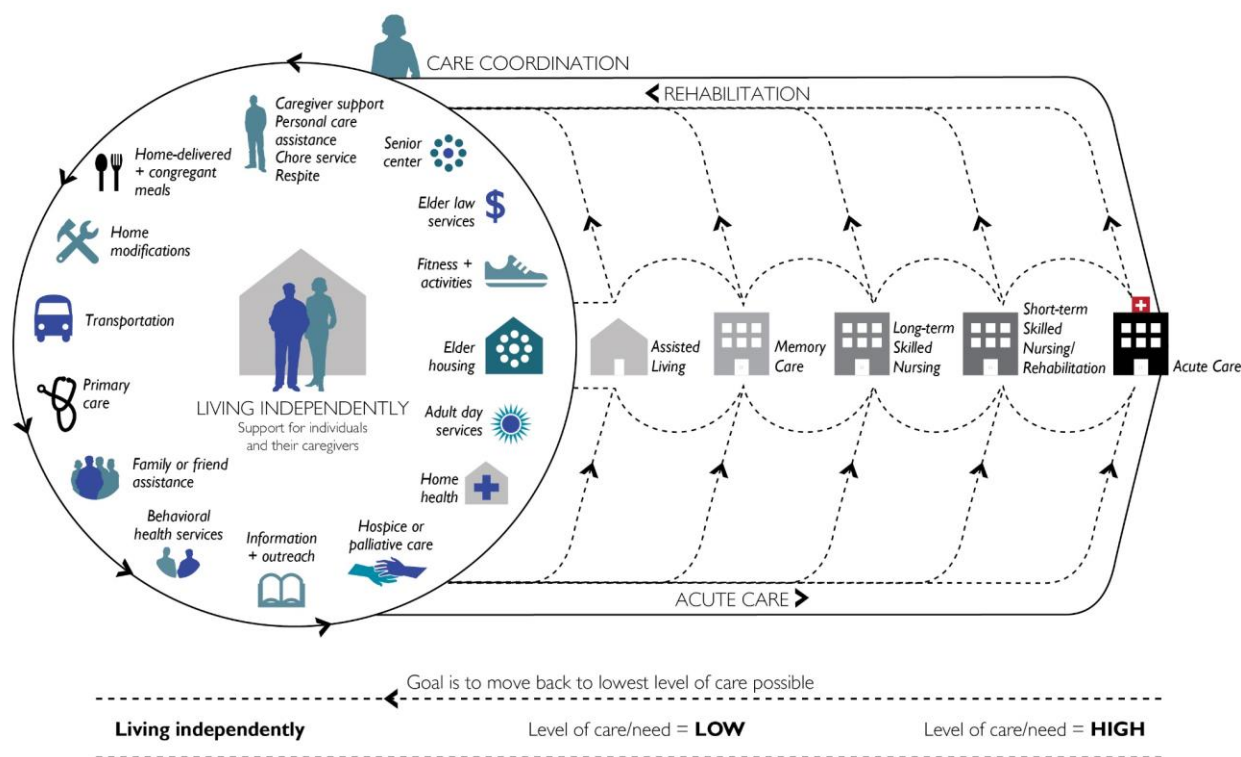
This plan is developed alongside several existing and collaborating planning efforts:

- Department of Health and Social Services Priorities and Core Services
- DHSS Long-Term Services and Supports Recommendations for a Strategic Plan
- Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias
- Alaska Core Competencies for Direct Care Workers in Health and Human Services
- State Plan for Independent Living
- Senior Community Service Employment Program State Plan
- Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan
- Alaska Health Workforce Coalition 2017-2021 Action Agenda

Long-term Services and Supports Continuum of Care for Seniors

To help seniors maintain their independence for as long as possible, housing, services and supports for seniors are typically provided along a continuum of care from services provided in homes and communities to more intensive services provided in assisted living and, at the highest level of care, in skilled nursing facilities and acute medical hospitals.

Figure 1: Long-term Services and Supports Continuum of Care for Seniors



Graphic Credit: Agnew::Beck Consulting, 2019

Assistance at lower levels of care (shown in the circle wrapping around the senior living independently in Figure 1) can prevent or delay seniors from requiring more costly, institutional levels of care. Aging Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) and care coordinators help individuals and caregivers access necessary services. Matching seniors to the right level of care is good for seniors, their caregivers,

families, communities and the state. When pieces of the continuum are missing, elders often end up in inappropriate care settings. For example, elders can be placed in nursing facilities or even hospital long-term care "swing beds" in rural hubs because they aren't able to receive a lower level of care in their home communities.

Role of the State of Alaska in the Continuum of Care

Older Americans Act and other state funding sources allow the state to provide grants and Medicaid-billable services to support a full continuum of care. This includes home-delivered and congregate meals, transportation, information and outreach, adult day services, fitness and activities, elder-law services, seniors center programming and operations, caregiver support, personal care assistance, chore services, respite, care coordination, home modifications, home health and assisted living. Medicaid is the primary funding source for skilled nursing care. A detailed list of State programs is in Appendix G.

State Plan for Senior Services FY2016-2019 Implementation

The Advisory Committee met in 2016 to report on the implementation of State Plan for Senior Services FY2016-2019.

Key successes from Previous Plan:

- Advocated successfully to maintain or increase funding for senior grant-funded services despite a challenging fiscal environment to keep pace with a growing senior population.
- Developed Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias to promote awareness about the public health needs of a growing senior population at risk of developing dementia and working to provide appropriate services to improve quality of life for persons with dementia and their caregivers. Implementation efforts are ongoing.
- Protected funding levels for Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Citizen Development Fund which was used to develop 271 senior housing units since FY16.
- Successfully piloted and implemented the "ADRC First" program that utilizes a screening tool to identify needs of vulnerable Alaskans and provides assistance in connecting them to appropriate services.
- Advocated for programs serving vulnerable older Alaskans including the "Silver Alert, reauthorization of the Senior Benefits program, Medicaid Adult Dental, Designated Caregiver education, modernized the Power of Attorney statute, among other successful legislative efforts.
- Conducted Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey modules to gather Alaska-specific data about the needs of people living with self-reported cognitive impairment, described as increasing memory decline and confusion, in addition to data about the needs of family caregivers.
- Launched efforts to promote public awareness about the role of unpaid natural support caregivers and their needs, especially for dementia caregivers.
- Enhanced volunteer support for the Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman which has increased the number of annual visits to residential assisted living and nursing home facilities.
- Provided vocational training to adults age 55+ with two or more employment barriers through the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training Program which resulted in vocational placement.

Demographic Trends

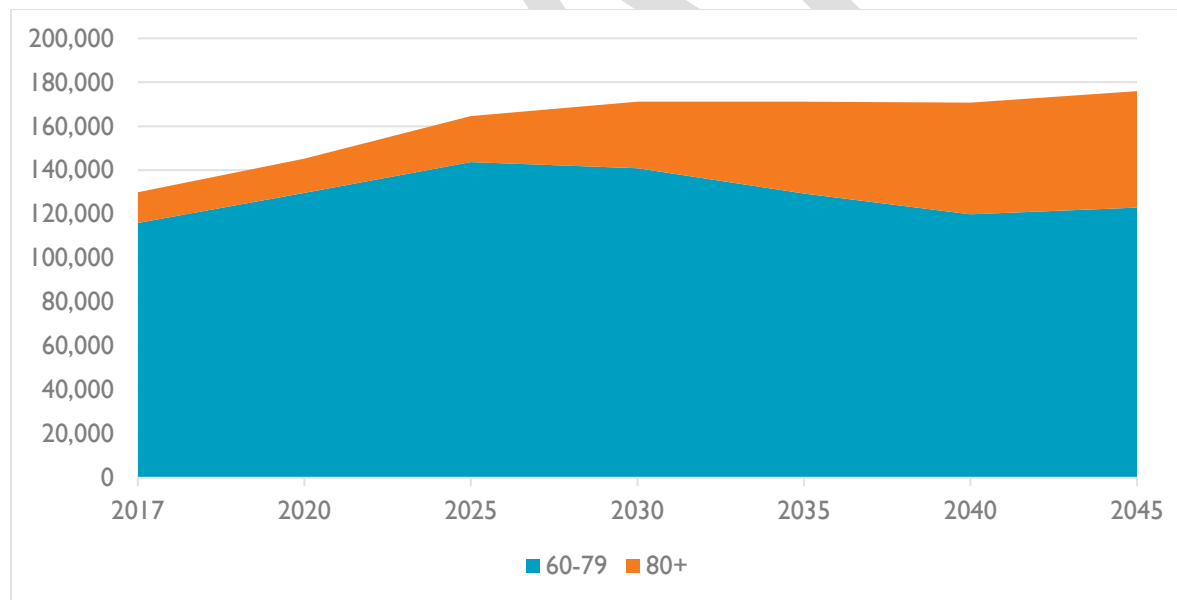
This section of the plan shares the demographic trends that inform the funding formula shared in Appendix B. Additional relevant demographic information is shared in Appendix E.

Population Growth

Alaska's senior population 60 and older reached an estimated 134,983 in 2018, representing 18.2 percent of the state's total population. Of Alaska's senior population, 14,514 individuals are 80 years of age or older.³ From 2010 to 2018 the state's 60 and older population grew, on average, six percent each year meaning that there were just over 44,000 more seniors in the state in 2018 than just eight years before.⁴ The Administration on Aging's "A Profile of Older Americans: 2017" identified a 65.5 percent increase in Alaska's population 65 and older from 2006 to 2016. This was the top growth rate in the United States and twice the national growth rate of 32.5 percent.

Continued growth in Alaska's senior population 60 and older is expected until 2030, while the population 80 and older continues to grow over the next thirty years. Planning for greater capacity and infrastructure across the spectrum of senior services, including home and community-based services as well as long-term care, is especially significant for older seniors who typically require more support services. Figure 2 indicates senior population projections from 2017 to 2045.⁵

Figure 2: Population Projections for Alaska's Senior Population, 2017-2045



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Projections, 2017-2045

Geography

Alaska's seniors age 60 and older live primarily in the state's most populated regions – Anchorage, the Interior (which includes Fairbanks and surround areas) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. As a

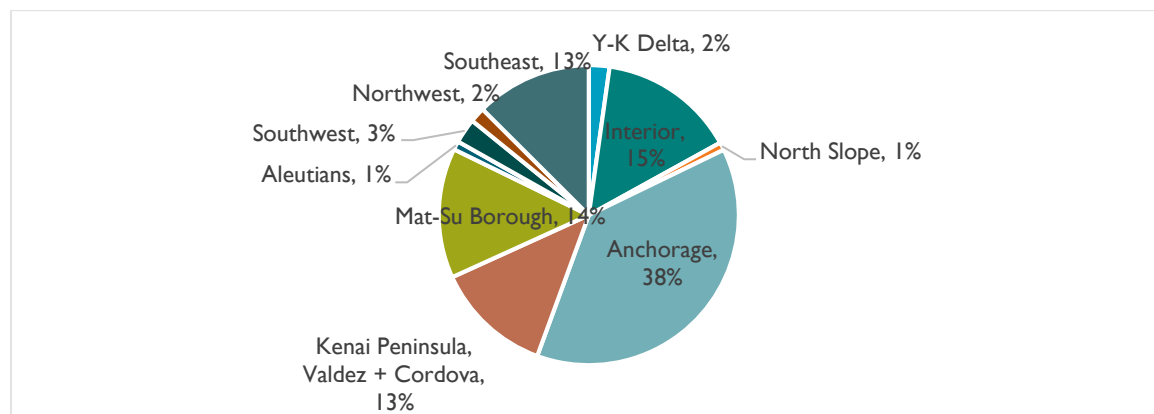
³ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2018.

⁴ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2010-2018.

⁵ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Projections, 2017-2045.

percentage of the total population, seniors represent a larger share of individuals living in Southeast Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula, Valdez and Cordova region.⁶

Figure 3: Percentage of All Seniors 60+ by Region, 2017

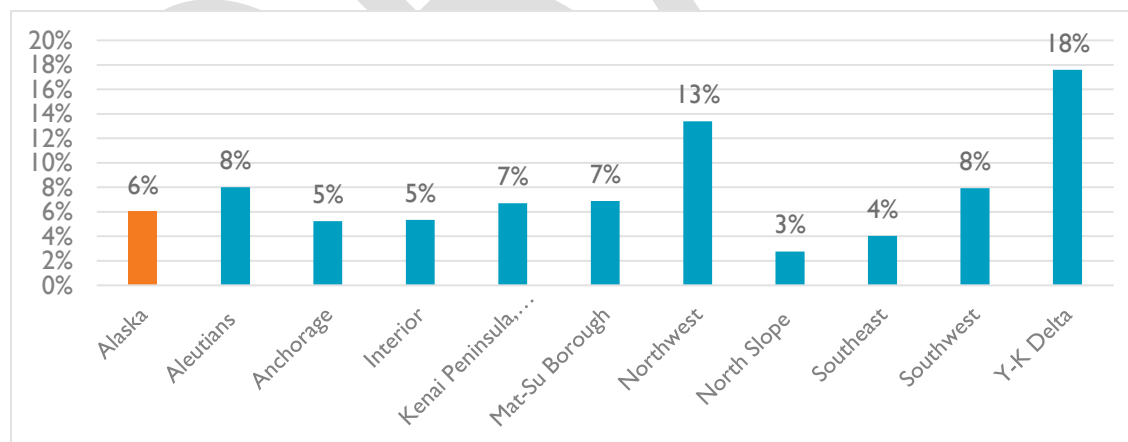


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2017.

Income and Poverty

In Alaska as a whole, six percent of the 60 and older population lives in poverty (roughly \$12,000-\$16,000 per year depending on household size). The percentage of seniors living in poverty ranges from just three percent on the North Slope to 18 percent in the Yukon-Kuskokwim (Y-K) Delta. Seniors in poverty in the most populous regions of the state (Anchorage, the Interior and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough) ranges from five to seven percent of the population.⁷

Figure 4: Percent of Seniors 60+ Living in Poverty, 2017



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau.

⁶ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2017.

⁷ American Community Survey Estimates, 2017.

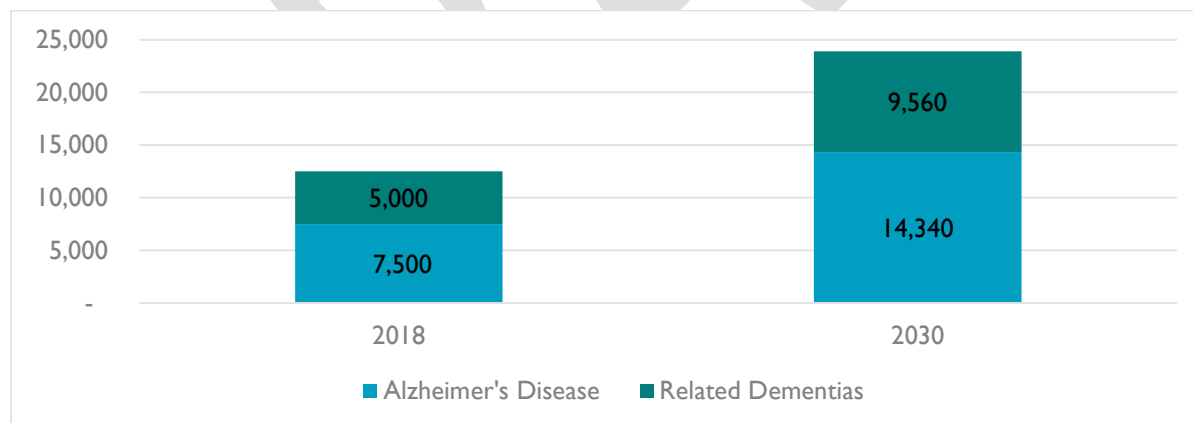
Race and ethnicity

White seniors are over-represented compared to the total population, while other races are slightly under-represented. For example, 77 percent of seniors 60 and older are white, while only 66 percent of the total population is white. Meanwhile, only 12 percent of seniors are Alaska Native although 15 percent of the state's total population is Alaska Native. African-Americans are also under-represented in the senior population. Seven percent of the total population identify as two or more races, while just three percent of the senior population are two or more races. Three percent of seniors of any race are of Hispanic origin, compared to seven percent of the total population.⁸

Dementia

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) are estimated to affect 12,500 Alaskans over the age of 65. It is estimated that by 2030 the number of seniors with ADRD in the state will almost double, affecting 23,900 seniors.⁹ Rates of Alzheimer's Disease increase with age. Just three percent of the 65 to 74 year old population experience Alzheimer's Disease, while 32 percent of seniors 85 and older do.¹⁰ Impacts of cognitive decline, as reported by individuals 60 and older, include giving up day to day household activities, needing assistance with day to day activities, being less able to work or engage in activities outside the home and having household, work or social functional limitations.¹¹ While rates of ADRD rise, the availability of potential caregivers declines. In 2018 there were 15.9 potential caregivers age 40 to 64 for every senior over 80. By 2030, this will decrease to just 7 potential caregivers for each senior over age 80.

Figure 5: Prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in Alaskans 65+



Source: Alzheimer's Association, 2018 Alaska Alzheimer's Statistics, AK Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Aging.com, Agnew::Beck analysis

Figure 6: Ratio of Potential Caregivers 40-64 to Older Seniors 80+ in Alaska

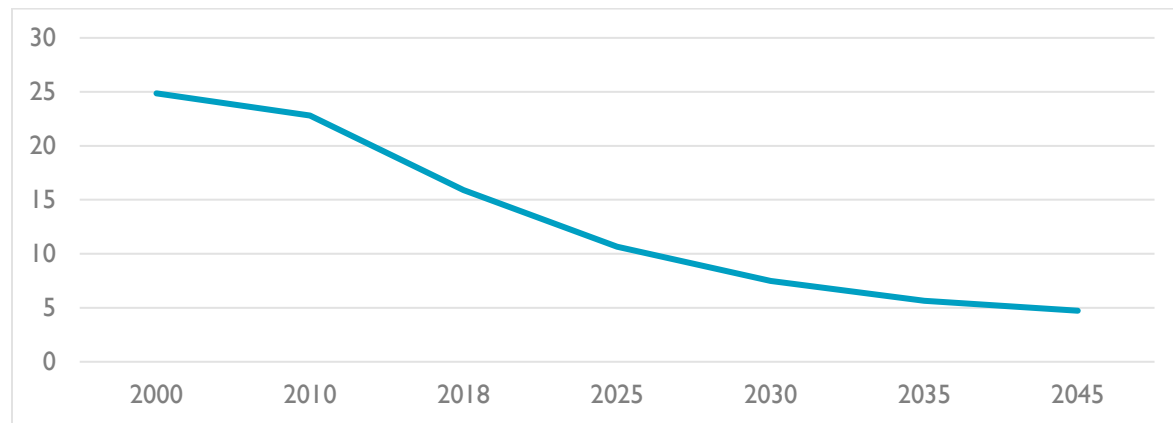
⁸ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau.

⁹ Alaska Alzheimer's Statistics, 2018; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2018; aging.net; Agnew::Beck – Analysis.

¹⁰ Alzheimer's Association, 2019 Alzheimer's Statistics Facts and Figures Report. Projections. Note: Estimates do not include the related dementias that are not considered Alzheimer's.

¹¹ Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System – Cognitive Decline Module, 2016.

Figure 7: Ratio of Potential Caregivers 40-64 to Older Seniors 80+ in Alaska

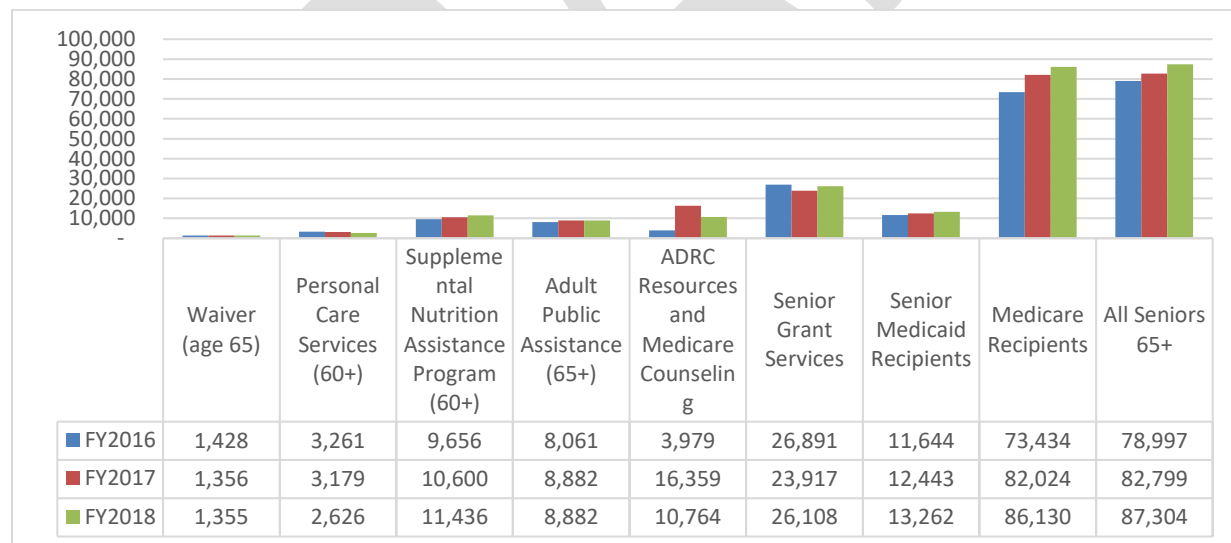


Source: 2018 Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau

Program Utilization and Expenditures

Over the past three years utilization of services for seniors has increased across most areas of service. Waiver, Personal Care Services and Senior Grant Services have seen slight decreases in utilization. Medicare saw the largest growth in utilization with 12,669 more users in fiscal year 2018 than in fiscal year 2016.¹²

Figure 8: Alaska Senior Services Utilization, FY16-FY18



Source: Retrieved on 4/11/2019 by RAU (data source: DS3 and Harmony); Evergreen Economics Compilation of State of Alaska data; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2010-2018

¹² Retrieved on 4/11/2019 by RAU (data source: DS3 and Harmony); Source: evergreen Economics Compilation of State of Alaska data.

Needs Assessment Activities and Findings

“I think there should be housing for seniors of my age group that is affordable. All I have found in Anchorage & Mat-Su were \$3,000.00 a month, which I could not afford. I either make too much income or do not have enough.” – Senior Survey 2018 Respondent

The Needs Assessment began in February 2018 and included seven facilitated conversations with seniors including a targeted session for people aging with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These sessions included assessment questions to identify opportunities and gaps in services for seniors in Alaska communities. The planning process also included a senior and a provider survey to identify the top issues of concern to seniors. Appendix A provides additional detail on the needs assessment methodology and findings.

Elder-Senior Listening Sessions

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) held seven elder-senior listening sessions between February and November 2018, with sessions taking place in Wrangell, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Nome, Shishmaref, and a targeted session for people aging with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The purpose of these listening sessions was to gather first-hand public input on elder-senior issues and to identify “what is working” and “what is not working” in Alaska’s communities. The listening sessions ranged in attendance from 6 to 34 seniors, resulting in a total of 152 participants. The listening sessions were formatted as facilitated discussions around a set of targeted questions. Elders across Alaska are concerned about access to healthcare, housing and assisted living/coordinated care, however they have a strong desire to stay in their communities and more broadly Alaska.

2018 Survey of Alaska Seniors

The ACoA’s survey of Alaskans age 55 years and older received 3,130 responses, providing insight on topics ranging from health care to housing, from finances to senior services. Many responders also included open-ended comments on issues of concern to them, sharing their insights and ideas for solutions. Access to healthcare and affordable housing are the greatest concerns for respondents of the 2018 Senior Survey.

2018 Provider Survey

The ACoA also surveyed service providers about their perceptions of senior needs now and within the next five years, hearing from 126 providers in Alaska. Senior service providers are more concerned about ensuring access to assisted living and long-term care facilities than respondents of the Senior Survey and identified transportation and dementia care services as broader concerns facing Alaska’s senior population.

Needs Assessment Key Findings

“Adult protective services are located far away, and there is not enough training for local people to know when abuse is happening and how to report it.” – Senior Survey 2018 Respondent

This needs assessment process produced a substantial amount of useful qualitative and quantitative data. In January 2019, this information was compiled and analyzed, with findings presented to the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services Advisory Committee during the kick-off meeting in April 2019. The Needs Assessment highlighted the following issues that directly inform the six goals that frame the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY2020-2023.

Health Care. Respondent. Seniors in Alaska are concerned about access to health care in their communities. This concern was heard in many of the listening sessions and was ranked as the most important concern of seniors in the senior survey. Providers noted access to healthcare services such as primary, dementia care and behavioral health as important barriers that need to be addressed as the number of seniors who need care continues to grow.

Financial Concerns. Throughout the needs assessment process, a number of concerns about financial security were raised. Elder-listening session participants discussed everything from the value of living a subsistence lifestyle to worries about the cost of living. The senior survey showed financial security as the second most important concern of seniors in Alaska. The providers survey identified financial need (not enough food, money to cover energy costs, etc.) as the most important issue facing older adults today.

Elder Justice. The issue of elder abuse and neglect is an important priority for Alaska. Twenty percent of respondents to the senior survey indicated they knew someone or have personally experienced some form of elder abuse or exploitation, but 60 percent of these respondents indicated that they did not report the abuse. Elder abuse and exploitation can occur in many ways, with the most common instances being financial exploitation, emotional abuse, and neglect (according to the Senior Survey). Providers indicated that protecting vulnerable seniors from abuse was the goal area from the past plan that they were least likely to change, indicating a broad support for initiatives and supports to elders experiencing or are likely to experience abuse in any form.

Senior Housing. During the elder-senior listening sessions, nearly all communities listed availability of affordable senior housing as an issue in need of improvement. The provider survey ranked independent senior housing as the second most important service area that is insufficient throughout Alaska. The provider survey also identified assisted living for mentally ill seniors that can be compounded by dementia and independent living senior housing as the second and fourth most important issues facing seniors and their families today.

Sense of Community. During the elder-senior listening sessions, the importance of a strong sense of community was raised in several sessions. Senior Centers are utilized significantly, with 42 percent of the senior survey responses stating they visited their centers at least once a month. Senior Centers are also used as a source of information about programs and services and serve as hubs for social engagement and 50 percent of senior survey respondents indicated that senior center programs and activities were very important to seniors in their community.

Home and Community Based Long Term Support Services. “Services for seniors that promote aging in place” was a recurring theme heard through the elder-senior listening sessions. According to the senior survey, the top five agency supportive services used by respondents included senior meals served at a senior center, senior exercise, senior center recreation activities, transportation and homemaker/chore services. These services all help individuals age in place for longer. The top three concerns for senior survey respondents who wish to age in place were declining health, access to healthy foods and limited income to afford necessities.

“There are very few to no services for coordination, caregiver support and other geriatric support needs except thru Medicaid/Medicaid waiver.” – Senior Survey 2018 Respondent

Key Issues for the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services 2020-2023

As Alaska's senior population continues to increase, the demand for services also increases. The goals and objectives in this plan were developed to address the following key issues identified by the advisory committee based on current trends in population demographics, program utilization, and the results of needs assessment activities.

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

For seniors living in the community and those living in assisted living facilities, exploitation of seniors through Internet marketing, scams, and fraud is a growing concern. Particularly for those seniors or caregivers seeking in-home assistance using un-vetted Internet sources or providers who are not affiliated with a certified agency, consumers and caregivers report receiving sub-standard care. Public education and other resources are needed to bring awareness to seniors and to help them to be wise consumers of in-home supports and other services.

Food Security and Senior Hunger

Having consistent and reliable access to affordable and nutritious foods is an important factor for both the overall health and quality of life for seniors. Many seniors in Alaska are concerned about food security and are unsure where their next meal will be coming from, and often must choose between purchasing food, medications, and/or paying other bills. Barriers to healthy food access are often magnified for seniors who, in many cases, live on fixed income, have less reliable access to transportation, and are more affected by chronic illness. Seniors in Alaska who may have at one point supplemented their food budget with subsistence living practices, may find themselves less physically able to engage in these activities, further straining food affordability. While there are resources available to help prevent and alleviate senior hunger in Alaska such as food banks, home-delivered meals and supplemented assistance programs, these can leave coverage gaps and or are not accessible to all Alaskan's living throughout the State.

Transportation

Seniors, especially those who can no longer drive, need reliable transportation to activities, medical appointments and visits to family and friends. Transportation provides access to resources and community life that are essential to keep seniors both mentally and physically healthy. However, transportation services are often patchy and uncoordinated, as many providers are limited by the funding source or mission. For example, a van transport may only be available for rides to medical appointments, but not the grocery store. Furthermore, the majority of places seniors live in the state are not walkable, so car or bus is the only way to leave the house. Winter conditions such as snow berms and ice impede seniors from accessing bus routes that do exist.

Financial Security

Financial concerns for seniors range from paying monthly bills for food, utilities and rent to planning and paying for long-term care services. Most seniors live on a fixed income, so when utility prices increase, the amount of money that seniors have to spend on things like food and activities decreases. Long-term care services are difficult to plan because senior needs for support can be variable and unpredictable. Furthermore, the cost of assisted living is prohibitive for many Alaskan families.

Family Caregiver Supports + Quality of Care

Family caregivers need resources to help them identify the questions to ask when selecting service providers, the difference between certified and private providers and increased awareness of the Aging and Disability Resource Centers and other credible information and referral sources. While agencies

providing grant-funded or Medicaid-billable services are regulated by the State of Alaska, many private providers are not. Given the very limited workforce available in Alaska to provide for in-home care needs, often there are few choices and limited information on quality to guide seniors and their caregivers in selecting private-pay service providers. In 2019 Alaska received a grant to develop and pilot standardized screening, assessment and care plan for the caregivers of individuals experiencing dementia. The goal of this pilot project is to reduce caregiver burden and improve care for the recipient to extend the amount of time a caregiver is able to provide care at home.

Increased Resources to Meet the Needs of a Growing Senior Population

From 2010 to 2018 the state's 60 and older population grew, on average, six percent each year resulting in just over 44,000 more seniors in the state in 2018 than eight years before.¹³ Continued growth in Alaska's 60 and older population is expected until 2030, while the population 80 and older will continue to grow over the next thirty years. Planning for increased capacity and infrastructure across the continuum of care for seniors, including home and community-based services as well as long-term care, is especially significant for older seniors who typically require more support services. While the senior population is growing and will continue to grow, funding for services is flat.

Positive and Meaningful Aging

In the last century, average life expectancy increased by nearly 30 years in the United States. Many people can expect to live eight or nine decades. This is a great achievement and should be celebrated, however, this newly created stage of life also creates new challenges. As we move forward, the importance of attitudes towards aging should not be underestimated. A positive outlook can drastically affect health, resilience, and even the length of our lives. There are many positive aspects about aging that have traditionally been celebrated including wisdom, self-confidence, and watching a family expand while providing guidance from past experiences. As lifespans gradually lengthen, and the population continues to age, seniors should enter this new era of life with excitement about the freedom it provides. Because social isolation and loneliness have such a negative impact on physical health, overall well-being and lifespan, finding something meaningful to do is important, and great effort and thought should be put behind creating meaningful opportunities for this new generation.

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)

The population of Alaskans 65+ with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias (ADRD) is expected to almost double in the next decade to 23,900 in 2030 from 12,500 in 2018. However, the lack of facilities and funding for seniors with ADRD often results in seniors living in care settings that are not appropriate to meet their needs. The 2014 Alaska Roadmap to Address ADRD Roadmap identified goals related to improved access to appropriate housing, services and supports for individuals with ADRD and development of a workforce trained in dementia care. The ADRD Roadmap lays out an implementation plan to achieve these goals. There has been considerable progress since 2014. Some examples include (1) development/implementation of the new Community First Choice which provides cueing and supervision for persons with dementia; (2) passage of SB 72 which provides lay caregiver education on post-discharge needs of hospitalized patients; (3) new pilot project focused on providing personalized training and supports for dementia caregivers to increase their ability to care for loved ones with dementia at home; (4) implementation of HomeMap for persons with physical disabilities and mental impairments.

¹³ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Population Estimates, 2010-2018.

Senior Behavioral Health

The ACoA advocates for behavioral health programs and services targeted to older Alaskans as part of its role as a beneficiary board of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and directly to the Alaska Legislature. During the period covered by the previous state plan, ACoA helped to formulate and obtain funding for the SOAR (Senior, Outreach, Assessment, and Referral) program within the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH). This program is now defunded.

Other projects for which ACoA advocated along with other partners which were begun during this period included two evidence-based systems designed to screen for depression and substance abuse in the primary care setting, where many seniors are comfortable and engaged with trusted care providers. Both Improving Mood, Promoting Access to Collaborative Treatment (IMPACT), depression screening, and Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral, Treatment (SBIRT), substance abuse screening, are undergoing, limited-scale trials in Alaska, with plans to expand these programs into additional venues pending their demonstration to be effective.

Senior Fall Prevention

Accidental and usually preventable falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for those age 65 and older and are the leading cause of fatal injury for those older than 75. In 2015, 36 older adults died from injuries caused by a fall and 1,600 were hospitalized.¹⁴ Falls are expensive, costing fall-related patients an average of \$27,000 per hospitalization. The Alaska Senior Fall Prevention Coalition has taken a multi-faceted approach to fall prevention, including close collaboration with the Division of Public Health Chronic Disease and Prevention Program, Senior and Disabilities Services, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and ACoA.

Through public awareness, seniors are encouraged to begin a program of regular exercise, discuss their medications with their health care provider, have their sight and hearing checked, and review their homes for hazards. Public awareness campaigns have been successful in the past, and future campaigns are in the planning stages. Events in the past have included Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance and Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL), programs designed to help seniors stay healthy and balanced. Successful fall risk screening prevention clinics and train-the-trainers events for falls prevention exercise programs have also been offered. Exercise information and programs such as “A Matter of Balance” and “Alaska Workout to Go” are also available in pamphlet and video forms that help seniors increase their balance.

Senior Housing Continuum

A full housing continuum with appropriate supports is needed to help seniors age in place, remain securely housed and avoid homelessness. Services along the senior housing continuum include home modifications, senior housing, specialized supportive housing for people with dementia and other cognitive impairments, and coordination to assist with transitions between levels of service.

Maintaining the existing ratio of senior housing beds to senior citizens requires an estimated 4,450 new beds be built or converted by 2030, or approximately 318 per year; however, current services do not address current deficits in senior housing faced by regions throughout the state.¹⁵

¹⁴ Alaska Statewide Violence and Injury Prevention Plan 2018-2022

¹⁵ AHFC Housing Needs Assessment 2018

Workforce for Providing Health Care and Supports

Alaska has a very limited pool of available workers to provide supportive services for seniors. In the larger communities, it is also very difficult to find primary care providers who will accept Medicare. There is also a very limited number of primary care providers who specialize in geriatrics. The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition 2017-2021 Action Agenda identified Direct Support Professionals/Direct Care Workers as the highest priority healthcare occupation; primary care providers are also one of the top priority occupations for Alaska.¹⁶ The direct caregiver workforce for home health services is a key issue across all aspects of the workforce including recruitment, retention, training, oversight and quality of care. Growth in the direct care workforce has not kept pace with the growth in the senior population. Oversight and quality of care are especially an issue for those paying privately as the quality controls from grant and Medicaid waiver funded services are not in place for private pay services. Agency direct care staff are sometimes not trained or certified for providing in-home care. The direct care workforce often does not have the appropriate training to work with people with ADRD.

One possible strategy to address the limited workforce is to use technology to support seniors in their homes and communities as much as possible and appropriate in order to optimize the available workforce for those tasks that must be provided in-person.

End of Life Care

Older people of advanced age require an array of end-of-life services including palliative and hospice care. End-of-life care can increase quality of life at the end of life for the person and their caregivers and is an unmet need across the state. Elders living in both rural and urban areas often want to spend their remaining days at home and in their own communities surrounded by family and friends where the people, food, and language are familiar. Currently, there is no provision for hospice care in the State-funded portion of the long-term care system. Hospice care is funded by Medicare, provided on a voluntary private pay basis, or partially covered by private insurance. Hospice provides the older person with the means to die a “good death” where only palliative care is provided to relieve pain and discomfort. Patients, family members, and facilities are better served when they are helped to identify and articulate their personal spiritual and philosophical concerns and desires in the dying process.

¹⁶ Alaska Health Workforce Coalition 2017-2021 Action Agenda, [https://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/health/AHWC-2017-2021-Action-Agenda-September-2017-Final-With-Cover-\(2\).pdf](https://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/health/AHWC-2017-2021-Action-Agenda-September-2017-Final-With-Cover-(2).pdf) Accessed May 2019.

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3. Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals

The Advisory Committee for the FY2020 – 2023 Alaska State Plan for Senior Services reviewed these plan components from the FY2016-2019 State Plan and adjusted them as needed to address the needs and opportunities over the coming four years.

Vision

The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY 2020-2023 builds on strong partnerships to provide high-quality, culturally-sensitive, accessible services for Alaskans 60 and above to live healthy, independent, meaningful lives in the place and manner of their choosing.

Guiding Principles

1. **Keep Seniors Strong, Healthy and Secure.** Seniors can access information, education, and resources to help them make healthy choices about nutrition, physical activity, community involvement, relationships and peer support, that will reduce their risk of chronic disease, mental illness and substance misuse, leading to healthy and productive lives. Seniors have access to financial planning tools and a safety net to ensure they can age with dignity and choice.
2. **Promote Independence, Empowerment, and Choice.** Older Alaskans are recognized as a valuable resource and a powerful economic and political force. Wherever possible, strengthen the voice and participation of seniors on issues affecting them.
3. **Target Services to the Most Vulnerable Seniors.** Service providers focus on outreach to seniors who are frail, low-income, members of minority communities, non-English-speakers, and those living in rural areas, to ensure that they are aware of and able to access services and supports.
4. **Highlight Community Contributions.** Above all, programs and services seek to acknowledge and support the abundant vital contributions of older Alaskans. Supporting seniors increases their capacity to contribute to the well-being of their families, communities, and all Alaskans.
5. **Offer a Full Continuum of Care and Housing.** Services are provided in each community or region to meet the needs of seniors at each stage of the continuum of care.

Goals

1. Promote healthy aging and provide access to comprehensive and integrated health care.
2. Ensure seniors are financially secure.
3. Protect vulnerable seniors from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation.
4. Ensure seniors have access to quality, affordable, accessible, safe, and appropriate housing, including senior housing, across the continuum of care.
5. Promote opportunities for meaningful aging, intergenerational connectivity, and civic engagement.
6. Provide quality and affordable home and community-based long-term support services to provide seniors with the highest quality of life.

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4. Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

This chapter shares the objectives and strategies for the six goals of the State Plan for Senior Services FY2020 – 2023. To make this plan easier to track, one to three performance measures are included for each goal.

Goal 1: Promote healthy aging and provide access to comprehensive and integrated health care.

Objectives + Strategies

A. Seniors have access to healthy food.

- Strategy: Maintain the number of seniors receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP), congregate, home delivered and Title VI meals.
- Strategy: Maintain or increase the number of seniors receiving home-delivered meals.
 - Lead: Division of Seniors and Disabilities Services (SDS)
- Strategy: Standardize reporting for grantee recipients across a few key categories to better measure grant outcomes.
 - Lead: SDS
- Strategy: Increase access to traditional Alaska Native foods, subsistence harvests and other culturally important foods in senior centers, assisted living homes, and skilled nursing facilities.
- Measure: Quality of life as a result of meals.
 - Lead: SDS
 - Baseline: Westat Third Party Contractor

B. Health promotion and disease prevention activities are available statewide.

- Strategy: Increase the number of seniors participating in programs statewide.
 - Lead: SDS
- Strategy: Reduce the fall-related hospitalization rate for seniors age 55 and over.
 - Lead: Division of Public Health (DPH)/Health Analytics and Vital Records (HAV)
- Measure: Percentage of patients 18 to 85 in Alaska FQHCs who had a diagnosis of hypertension and whose blood pressure was adequately controlled. (NQF 18)
 - Lead: Division of Public Health
 - Baseline: 58% (2017, HRSA)

C. Increase access for seniors to integrated behavioral health and primary care.

- Strategy: Provide opportunities for Senior Mental Health First Aid training for primary care providers, senior services providers, community members, and caregivers.
 - Lead: UAA Alaska Training Cooperative
- Strategy: Add capacity among primary care physicians and behavioral health providers to serve seniors.
- Strategy: Increase coordination between providers of Title III and Title VI funding.
- Strategy: Promote use of Medicare code, 99483, for dementia care planning. Focus on primary care providers to include MD/DO, Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Physician Assistants. Target five percent of providers per year and increase number of providers knowledgeable about these codes.
 - Lead: Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska
- Strategy: Increase number of physicians with geriatric specialty.
 - Lead: NW GWEC

D. Increase the number of seniors with behavioral health needs who report improvement in key life domains (Department of Health and Social Services, DHSS, Objective 1.2.4).

- Strategy: Increase mean number of days Alaska adults 65 and older report being mentally healthy over the past 30 days.
 - Lead: Division of Public Health/Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- Measure: Suicide rate among Alaska adults age 65 and older.
 - Lead: Division of Public Health/Health Analytics and Vital Records
 - Baseline: 17.9 per 100,000 population (2013-2017)

E. Seniors have access to affordable health care.

- Strategy: Enhance the infrastructure in the Medicare Information Office to help seniors understand and use their Medicare benefits.
 - Lead: Medicare Information Office
- Strategy: Decrease cost of prescription drugs.
 - Lead: AARP, Medicare Information Office

F. Ensure access to appropriate non-opioid pain relief, guidance to avoid opioid misuse and diversion of opioid medications.

- Lead: Division of Behavioral Health



Goal 2: Ensure seniors are financially secure.

Objectives + Strategies

- A. **Support and promote awareness of safety net programs that benefit seniors such as core senior grant-funded services, Senior Benefits, and Heating Assistance programs.**
 - Strategy: Maintain funding level for safety net programs for seniors.
 - Lead: ACoA, AgeNET, AARP, SDS, ADRC programs
 - Strategy: Increase the number of seniors accessing the ADRC.
 - Lead: ADRC
- B. **Provide education so that seniors and caregivers understand financial and long-term care planning.**
 - Strategy: Increase attendance at AARP financial security seminars.
 - Lead: AARP Alaska and Medicare Information Office
 - Strategy: Increase the percentage of Alaska age 65 and older registering for the waitlist for the Pioneer Homes at age 65.
 - Lead: Alaska Pioneer Homes
- C. **Provide training and opportunities for senior employment.**
 - Measure: Number of Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) program participants.
 - Lead: MASST, Department of Labor
 - Baseline: 50

Cross-Cutting Measure

- Percent of adults over 65 who have incomes over 150% of federal poverty level
 - Baseline: 86.7% (2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, table S0102)



Goal 3: Protect vulnerable seniors from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation.

Objectives + Strategies

- A. Promote primary prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and reduce the rate of recidivism through education and awareness.**
- Measure: Decrease Adult Protective Services (APS) recidivism rates as measured by the percentage of seniors who are the subject of two or more reports of harm.
 - Lead: Adult Protective Services
 - Baseline: (APS)
 - Strategy: By 2020, the OTLCO will train and maintain a volunteer ombudsman base of 30 volunteers who will be able to make an additional 300 annual visits to facilities over the next 5 years.
 - Lead: OTLCO
 - Measure: Increase the number of OLTCO visits to long-term care facilities.
 - Lead: OLTCO
 - Baseline: 1,000
 - Strategy: Maintain or expand the number of hours state public health nurses spend working with communities on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation
 - Lead: Division of Public Health/Section of Public Health Nursing
- B. Promote awareness of elder justice issues.**
- Strategy: Standardize intake at APS.
 - Lead: APS
 - Strategy: Maintain number of seniors who receive legal assistance.
 - Lead: Alaska Legal Services
- C. Coordinate with the Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) to review Alaska's guardianship and conservatorship systems to ensure they meet the needs of seniors.**
- Strategy: Revise Alaska's probate statute.
 - Lead: WINGS
 - Strategy: Continuation of the WINGS group
 - Lead: WINGS
 - Strategy: Translate the Alaska guardianship training video into at least three languages.



Goal 4: Ensure seniors have access to quality, affordable, accessible, safe, and appropriate housing, including senior housing, across the continuum of care.

Objectives + Strategies

A. Promote successful models for aging in place.

- Strategy: Conduct a forum during the next state plan period to share successful models for aging in place. Present successful models for aging in place, naturally occurring retirement communities, house shares and trades, and specialized care settings. Invite seniors and caregivers to learn about how to age successfully and plan for long-term care needs.
 - Lead: ACoA, AHFC Senior Housing Office, AMHTA

B. Educate Alaskans about renovation loans, Home MAP, E-Mods and universal design options to make accessibility modifications to their homes.

- Strategy: Offer four events annually to diverse groups.
 - Lead: AHFC Senior Housing Office
- Strategy: Increase number of seniors who receive HomeMAP services to assess their home for aging in place.
 - Lead: Statewide Independent Living Council

C. Advocate for continuing development of affordable and accessible housing statewide.

- Strategy: Advocate to preserve funding for the AHFC SCHDF at FY2019 levels.
 - Lead: Alaska Association of Housing Authorities, ACoA, AgeNET
- Strategy: Increase the number of seniors accessing HUD 202, SCHDF, General Relief and other safety net programs.
 - Lead: AHFC Senior Housing Office, Division of Behavioral Health, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
- Strategy: Increase number of assisted living home operators accessing business planning and financing assistance to expand services.
 - Lead: AHFC Senior Housing Office
- Measure: Seniors per senior housing unit ratio (AHFC Housing Needs Assessment)
- Measure: Percent of seniors 60+ living in rental housing with costs that are less than 30% of median household income, which is considered affordable.
 - Baseline: 56.5% (2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, table S0102)

D. Educate the real estate industry and public members about the value of universal design for both new construction and renovation housing stock.

- Strategy: Increase number of public awareness events.
 - Lead: AHFC Senior Housing Office, Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska, ACoA

E. Address and reduce homelessness among seniors.

- Strategy: Work with Anchorage and Balance of State housing and homelessness coalitions to address senior homelessness and increase affordable housing stock.
 - Lead: AK Coalition on Housing and Homeless Coalition
 - Measure: 2,062 adults age 55+ received homeless assistance in 2018

Goal 5: Promote opportunities for meaningful aging, intergenerational connectivity, and civic engagement.

Objectives + Strategies

A. Promote opportunities for lifelong education.

- Strategy: Track and maintain the number of continuing education program for seniors and participation.
 - Lead: ACoA

B. Increase intergenerational interaction to promote understanding and support.

- Strategy: Increase participation in senior center and senior volunteer activities through Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparent, Senior Companions, and Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) Elder Mentor Program
 - Lead: Rural Elder Mentor Program and Serve Alaska (Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development)

C. Seniors have opportunities for meaningful civic engagement.

- Strategy: Promote awareness about the value of the older worker to businesses and civic groups through media activities and community presentations.
 - Lead: MASST, ACoA
- Strategy: Encourage seniors to actively engage in both local and statewide policy discussions and decision-making.
 - Lead: AARP, ACoA

D. Promote voter registration.

- Measure: Increase percentage of seniors age 65 and older registered to vote in Alaska.
 - Lead: OLTCO, AARP
 - Baseline: 73% of people age 60+ voted in the 2016 Alaska General Election (Division of Elections)

E. Promote participation in the Decennial Census + American Community Surveys.

- Lead: AARP, ACoA



Goal 6: Provide person-centered, quality, and affordable home and community-based long-term support services that provide seniors with the highest quality of life.

Objectives + Strategies

- A. Services are targeted to those seniors who are vulnerable and at risk for long-term care placement.**
- Strategy: Increase or maintain the percent of individuals receiving services within the target population. (The target population is defined as seniors needing assistance with two or more Activities of Daily Living, and/or Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia, or frail using 80+ as a proxy.)
 - Lead: Senior and Disability Services
- B. Develop a direct service workforce to meet the in-home services needs of the increasing senior population, especially in rural Alaska.**
- Strategy: Increase the number of Senior and Long-Term Care Service agencies accessing Alaskan Core Competencies training for their staff by 10% annually.
 - Lead: Alaska Training Cooperative
- C. Senior services are accessible and culturally appropriate.**
- Strategy: Increase capacity for sustainable senior service providers.
 - Lead: ANTHC, SDS, AgeNET
 - Strategy: Increase utilization of telehealth and other forms of technology for purposes of increasing access to quality services in rural areas.
 - Lead: ANTHC, SDS
 - Strategy: Increase coordination between Title III and Title VI programs to maximize resources and services available to target under-served populations and enhance partnerships.
 - Lead: UAA National Resources Center for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders
- D. Family and other informal caregivers have training and resources to provide quality care.**
- Strategy: Maintain or increase, if possible, the number of individuals participating in National Family Caregiver Support Program.
 - Lead: ACoA, Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska, AARP, SDS
 - Strategy: Track performance of the pilot Dementia Caregiver Grant
 - Lead: SDS
 - Strategy: Maintain in-home respite and adult day services to meet (family and other informal) caregiver needs for appropriate breaks in providing care (Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) Roadmap Strategy 5.1.2).
 - Lead: ACoA, AgeNET
 - Strategy: Strengthen supports for family caregiver programs, measured by advocacy efforts, including a campaign that focuses on the needs of family caregivers and explore possible legislation.
 - Lead: AARP, ACoA, DSDS
 - Measure: Increase training to caregivers about ADRD, resources available and approaches and strategies for providing care and reducing stress and fatigue (ADRD Roadmap Strategy 5.1.1).
 - Lead: Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska
 - Baseline: Number of caregivers participating in ARA trainings in 2018 (ARA)
- E. Streamline access to senior services by strengthening the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), case management, and the senior center network.**
- Strategy: Increase numbers of seniors served with Medicare counseling.

- Lead: SDS
- Strategy: Identify those villages lacking access to services by developing a list of senior centers as well as case managers by community who serve older Alaskans.
 - Lead: SDS and AgeNET
- Strategy: Increase number of seniors using senior centers for information.
 - Lead: SDS
- Measure: Number of seniors using ADRCs.
 - Lead: SDS
 - Baseline: 10,764 (FY2018)
- F. Improve services for seniors with complex care needs such as ADRD and behavioral health.**
 - Strategy: Educate Alaskans about prevention, diagnosis, treatment, costs and appropriate care for people with ADRD through all possible media, in-person presentations, and policy advocacy (ADRD Roadmap Strategy 1.1.1)
 - Lead: Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, AMHTA, ACoA, Alaska Training Cooperative
 - Strategy: Identify opportunities to improve education for Alaskans affected by ADRD.
 - Lead: Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, AMHTA, ACoA, Alaska Training Cooperative
 - Strategy: Educate Alaskans about diagnosis, treatment, costs and care for individuals living with dementia through public outreach, policy advocacy and media campaigns.
 - Lead: Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, AMHTA, ACoA, Alaska Training Cooperative
 - Strategy: Increase opportunities to educate and train providers regarding best care practices to support Alaskan seniors experiencing ADRD, particularly those seniors also living with developmental disabilities or behavioral health needs.
 - Lead: Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, AMHTA, ACoA, Alaska Training Cooperative
 - Strategy: Increase the availability of less restrictive alternatives to acute care settings for seniors with complex behaviors and corresponding care needs.
 - Lead: Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, AMHTA, ACoA, Alaska Training Cooperative
- G. Work with the legislature to develop and implement regulations for quality standards for long term services and supports, including residential and in-home settings, so that caregivers' skills are appropriate to the population they serve.**
 - Strategy: Complete review of draft Assisted Living Home regulations to ensure they align with DSDS levels of care and the Roadmap's recommendations (Strategy 3.2.1).
 - Lead: Division of Health Care Services Residential Licensing, OLTCO, AMHTA
 - Strategy: Complete the regulation approval process for the draft Assisted living Home regulations.
 - Lead: DHSS Residential Licensing, OLTCO, AMHTA
 - Strategy: Complete a policy or position paper related to the regulation of in-home services outside of Medicaid waiver certified providers.
- H. Advocate for increased access to affordable transportation options.**
 - Strategy: Increase or at least maintain the number of seniors accessing assisted transportation.
 - Lead: AgeNET and ACoA

5. Outcomes and Performance Measures Related to Focus Areas

This section describes how the outcomes and measures identified in the previous chapter relate to the four focus areas identified by the AoA State Plan Guidance document, which include:

- A. **Older Americans Act (OAA) Core Programs.** OAA programs are encompassed in Titles III (Supportive Services, Nutrition, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion and Caregiver Programs), V (senior vocational training), VI (Native American Programs and Elder Services), and VII (Elder Rights Programs), and serve as the foundation of the national aging services network.
- B. **Administration on Community Living (ACL) Discretionary Grants.** Currently, Alaska does not receive Administration on Community Living (ACL) Discretionary funding.
- C. **Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Planning.** Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Planning includes policies that support consumer control and choice in senior programs and services.
- D. **Elder Justice.** Planned Elder Justice activities include preventing, detecting, assessing, intervening, and/or investigating elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

Appendix G includes additional descriptions of programs relevant to each focus area.

A. Older Americans Act (OAA) Core Programs

This section shares the goals and objectives associated with the OAA Core Programs in Alaska, specifically many of those under Title III and managed by SDS that serve as a foundation for the national aging services network.

Coordinate Titles III and VI Native American Programs

Title III grantees are directed to develop partnerships with Title VI grantees in their communities, and to submit a memorandum of agreement to ensure coordination of services to Alaska Native elders. Coordination of Title III and Title VI services is required to ensure equitable access to services for all seniors and elders, reduce duplication of services, develop services to address unmet needs, expand resources, and share information with Alaska Native elders about the available services, benefits, and resources.

Title VI grantees (there are 44 of them in Alaska) are also encouraged to collaborate with Title III grantees to maximize services available for their elders. In twelve cases (see below), the same organization is the Title VI and the Title III grantee in an area. In a number of other communities, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation between the agencies responsible for these separately-funded services is well underway.

For example, Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK) and Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) have been collaborating for more than 15 years to assure elders in the six Kodiak Island villages have at least three meals a week provided while they continue to live in their communities. SCOK gives Title III funds to KANA to supplement that agency's Title VI funds. With these supplemental Title III funds, congregate and home delivered meals are available to elders in the villages all year long. Previous to this collaboration, KANA's Title VI funds were not sufficient for meals to be provided all year long. SCOK Family Caregiver Support funds are also used to supplement KANA's Title VI Family Caregiver program in

providing training in Kodiak twice a year for caregivers in the villages. By combining Title III and Title VI funds, more efficient and consistent programs are being delivered to the six villages on Kodiak Island.

In Southeast Alaska, Southeast Senior Services (SESS), a Title III grantee, approached the area's tribal organizations years ago to help protect the current level of services in various communities, in anticipation of a funding shift of Title III monies to other areas of the state. SESS now partners with ten local tribes. Southeast Senior Services conducts a needs assessment for each tribe, assists with the Title VI grant application, provides the services, and handles the necessary reporting. As it does each tribe's needs assessment, SESS revisits with each tribe asking how it would like its Title VI Part A (nutrition and supportive services) and Part C (family caregiver support) monies used.

During the period of coverage of this state plan (FY 2020 through FY 2023), the State of Alaska agrees to continue to increase coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships between Title III and Title VI programs for older Alaskans. Title III grantees are to develop partnerships with Title VI grantees in their communities, and to submit a memorandum of agreement to ensure coordination of services to Native elders. Coordination of Title III and Title VI services is required in order to reduce duplication of services, develop services to address unmet needs, expand resources, and share information with Native elders about additional services, benefits, and resources available to them.

The State of Alaska facilitates planning and partnerships between Title III and Title VI grantees through the Rural Long-Term Services and Support Coordinator. Regional elder needs assessments are required to examine all resources including Title VI and Title III, and to include recommendations for increased collaboration where needed. The State of Alaska acknowledges that coordination is also a requirement for Title VI grantees and will initiate increased partnerships and collaboration between Title III and Title VI grantees.

Strengthen + Expand Title III and Title VII Programs

The State of Alaska uses the State's general fund to match home and community-based services funding by the OAA Title III and Title VII programs. The Nutrition, Transportation, and Support Services (NTS) program provides funding for meals, rides, information and assistance, and other OAA core supports. NTS grants are matched with local funds and provide essential base funding for senior services throughout the state. NTS core services help older Alaskans sustain their physical, cognitive, social health, and independence.

The National Family Caregiver Support grant program (NFCSP) provides relief from the emotional, physical, and financial stress experienced by family caregivers. This program provides information about available resources, assistance in gaining access to support services, counseling, training and support groups, respite care, and supplemental services.

The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP) for Older Alaskans grant program provides limited funding for health screening and health risk assessments, health education, physical fitness, medication education, senior fall prevention and other activities. The HPDP Grant Program provides grant funds to local provider agencies for evidence-based interventions to improve the health and wellness of seniors. HPDP grants are funded through a combination of Title III-D and state funds.

The State of Alaska also funds the Adult Protective Services and General Relief programs, which provide a safety net for Alaska's most vulnerable individuals age 18 and over.

In addition to OAA funded services for seniors, the State of Alaska funds an array of home and community-based services to create a full continuum of care including:

- **Senior In-Home Services Grant Program.** Senior In-Home Services provides funding for the following services: Case Management, Chore, Respite, and Extended Respite.
- **Adult Day Service (ADS).** ADS is an organized program of services during the day in a center-based group setting providing supervision and a secure environment for individuals who experience Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD), as well as those with physical, emotional, and/or cognitive impairments who are not safe staying alone while their caregivers are away.
- **Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementia (ADRD) Education and Support.** ADRD Education and Support provides funding to Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska to provide statewide information and education to providers, caregivers, and individuals about the signs, symptoms, causes, diagnosis, and effects of ADRD on an individual and their family.
- **ADRD Mini-Grants.** The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority provides mini-grants of up to \$2,500 to individuals who experience ADRD.
- **Senior Residential Services grant program.** SDS oversees three grants to rural/remote providers for supported residential living services to frail elders who do not have access to the Pioneer Homes or other assisted living facilities in their community or region.
- **General Relief Assistance (GRA).** General Relief Assistance provides for the most basic needs of many Alaskans without the personal resources to meet an emergent need and ineligible for assistance from other programs.

Alaska's regular Medicaid and 1915c waiver programs provide home and community-based services for income eligible individuals. The **Alaskans Living Independently (ALI)** waiver serves eligible disabled adults age 21 and older - who meet income eligibility and nursing facility level of care and funds assisted living, adult day services, meals, transportation and care coordination. Medicaid funded **Personal Care Assistance** provides support for seniors and persons with disabilities related to an individual's activities of daily living (bathing, eating, dressing, and other activities) as well as instrumental activities of daily living (such as shopping, laundry, and light housework).

The **Medicare Information Office** provides a toll-free number that anyone may call 24/7 for information on any aspect of Medicare. This office houses the **Alaska SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol)**, a program that emphasizes identification and prevention of Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse, and the **Alaska State Health Insurance Program (SHIP)**, a national program that offers one-on-one counseling and assistance to people with Medicare and their families. Alaska also offers a **Nursing Facility Transition Program** which helps families by offering support and funds to enable seniors and disabled citizens to return to independent or family living after a stay in a nursing facility.

The Division of Public Health's Section of **Emergency Programs** works with urban, rural, and tribal communities on emergency planning for vulnerable populations. Planning for the elderly population of Alaska is also being managed by the regional emergency preparedness nurses from the Section of Public Health Nursing.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Title V is administered by Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) and serves unemployed, low-income persons who are at least 55 years of age, have two or more barriers to employment, and have a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. The program assists seniors in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP is known in Alaska as Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) and is a component of the Division of Employment and Training Services. SCSEP is a required One-Stop partner under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and, as such, it is part of the Alaska Job Center (AJC) Network. The state intends that AJCs will provide services both to older individuals who are not eligible for the SCSEP and to those who are eligible but need the career services that the SCSEP is unable to provide.

SCSEP staff work directly with mandated partners to co-enroll participants in state training and employment programs and coordinates with other social service programs to provide supplemental assistance. This ensures that SCSEP is an integrated, effective, job-driven workforce program. DOLWD continues to solidify its commitments to promote public/private partnerships to refine strategies and increase the responsiveness of SCSEP by providing oversight and technical assistance activities to improve program performance.

SCSEP service delivery is integrated into both the state's workforce investment system as well as the senior service system. Skilled AJC and project operator staff provide quality services to older workers, and employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Alaska's strategy is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and the senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses.

SCSEP has strong working relationship between the Older Americans Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act programs regarding the long-term projections for employment opportunities for older workers, as Alaska's senior population continues to grow along with the needs of employers for older workers in health care and social services. Both the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) have developed strategies to keep pace with workforce needs through: planning, advocacy, public awareness efforts, and collaboration with other organizations focused on the well-being of older Alaskans.

Increase the Business Acumen of Aging Network Partners

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation offers the Assistance Provider Loan Program to provide an incentive to increase the availability of housing that is occupied by a live-in care caregiver ~~provider~~ who provides assistance in activities of daily living for individuals with either a physical or mental disability. The home can provide services for seniors, persons with mental health needs, or for foster children with special needs. The property should be modest in nature, appropriately sized for the number of residents and provide the necessary accessibility, equipment and therapy features. This program is available to individuals, partnerships, joint ventures, nonprofits, trusts or regional housing authorities and can be used to secure and/or renovate single-family residences, duplexes, triplexes or four-plexes. The housing must be licensed by the appropriate authority based on its intended use and at least two residents must reside in the home with a maximum of five residents. AHFC provides some assistance with business planning to assist applicants through the lending process.

SDS provides a detailed manual and regular training to care coordinators around Alaska to ensure quality services to seniors and their families. Care coordinators are part of the Alaska Care Coordination Network and to provide and receive mentorship from others. In addition, AARP, Age Net, the Trust Training Cooperative, Department of Labor and the Foraker Group also provide business training.

Integration of Health Care and Social Services Systems

The integration of health care and social services systems is evidenced in the strategic objectives and measures in Goal 1 of this plan: Promote healthy aging and provide access to comprehensive and integrated health care. Goal 6 also includes two relevant objectives.

B. ACL Discretionary Grants

Alaska does not receive ACL Discretionary Grants, however, there is an Aging and Disability Resource Center Program (ADRC) administered by SDS. Goal 6, Objective F is also relevant. See Appendix G for additional detail about the ADRC system.

C. Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Planning

A focus of this state plan is to make fundamental changes in the state policies and programs to support consumer control and choice. The Older Americans Act programs and services funded by Titles III, VI, and VII emphasize choice to the greatest degree possible. The Person-Centered Planning philosophy is integrated into ALL programs administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS). SDS Training Unit offers Person Centered Planning training to all home and community-based service providers that has been an expectation for care coordinators since 2008. Components of Person Centered Planning include: Addressing people using person-first language, helping people understand their care plans (using plain language), listening to the person define their goal for services, listening to how the person wants services to be delivered, thinking of the person as having a full life and resources of their own (including family, interests, personal history, culture, and other personal assets) looking for strengths as well as needs and designing plans around them, and informing participants about their rights.

Additionally, the objectives related to ensuring seniors are financially secure (Goal 2) support seniors to understand and plan for the financial realities of aging.

D. Elder Justice

Alaska has many programs and services that prevent, detect, assess, intervene, and/or investigate elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. This plan includes efforts to support and enhance multi-disciplinary responses to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation that involve the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO), Adult Protective Services (APS), Legal Assistance Developer, as well as law enforcement, health care professionals, financial institutions, and other essential partners across the state. The measurable objectives relevant to this focus areas are considered under Goal 3: Protect vulnerable seniors from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation. The following descriptions provide additional detail of planning and activities within these programs. Additional detail is provided in Appendix G.

Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO)

The OLTCO is authorized by federal and state law to resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, Alaskans age 60 and over that live in assisted living homes or skilled nursing facilities. Alaska Statute 47.62 also authorizes the Long-Term Care Ombudsman to aid seniors having difficulty with issues impacting their residential circumstances, such as unfair billing practices by utilities, unlawful evictions, neglectful guardians, or poor public housing management. The OLTCO also provides visits to facilities statewide so that seniors have regular and timely access to ombudsman services.

The OLTCO works closely with Adult Protective Services (APS) and the licensing and certification agencies for nursing facilities and assisted living homes to prevent abuse and neglect of seniors living in

long term care facilities. The OLTCO collaborates with the aging community to resolve systems issues at the state level, including the ACoA, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, SDS, Elder Fraud Unit, and AARP. Issues are addressed through projects such as Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia, legislation to increase protection for vulnerable adults, disaster preparation for seniors, and the creation of a "silver alert" system to locate missing vulnerable adults.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

Within the SDS, APS responds to reports of harm to vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults are those age 18 or older with a physical or mental impairment or condition that prevents them from protecting themselves or seeking help from someone else. Allegations may involve abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation. Alaska law requires that protective services not interfere with elderly or disabled individuals who are capable of caring for themselves.

APS conducts intake and screening for all Critical Incident Reports to SDS. Approximately 40 percent of Critical Incident Reports become APS reports of harm. APS is developing a database that will provide the ability to track and trend incidents of abuse across the state. Data tracking will inform abuse prevention and public education to prevent adult abuse and neglect.

Senior and Disabilities Services is looking to apply for the ACL Adult Protective Services Enhancement Grant. The purpose for applying for the grant is to enhance our Adult Protective Services unit's ability to provide the consistency and accuracy of decision making –at both the case and agency levels- by triaging reports of harm on vulnerable adults. We are looking to develop and implement research-based Structured Decision Making (SDM) assessment instruments. This SDM model, will assist APS with improving on our assessment of vulnerable adults in Alaska; help reduce subsequent harm to vulnerable adults by promoting safety; identifying needs; reducing harm and improving the delivery of appropriate services through research-based assessment instruments.

Legal Assistance Developer

The Legal Assistance Developer is the individual in each state who is responsible for providing leadership in developing legal assistance programs for persons 60 years of age and older and plays a key role in assisting states in the development and the provision of a strong elder rights system. The Developer provides oversight of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III B legal assistance programs and assures that at-risk older people have access to the civil justice system. The activities of these legal programs and the legal services developer help to support those most vulnerable older adults enabling them to retain autonomy and remain in the community and assist in the prevention of many kinds of abuses against older adults.

The Legal Assistance Developer for the State of Alaska is currently housed at SDS and provides oversight of the OAA Chapter 4 Section 731 legal assistance program through close collaboration with Alaska Legal Services and the Alaska Commission on Aging. The Legal Assistance Developer collaborates with ACoA's "Model Approach to Statewide Legal Delivery Systems" grantee, Alaska Legal Services, in the development of recommendations to ensure the provision of a strong elder rights system.

Legal assistance for seniors is provided statewide by Alaska Legal Services and assures that seniors, especially those at greatest social and economic risk, have access to the civil justice system. Access to legal information, advice and assistance helps older Alaskans preserve financial and personal independence, maintain control of their financial and health care decisions, maintain appropriate family relationships, and protect personal assets, clan property, and well-being.

6. Quality Management + Implementation

Quality Assurance

The Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) Quality Assurance Unit works to ensure the health and welfare of recipients through the monitoring and oversight of services to participants and their families. The Quality Assurance Unit strives to provide technical assistance as needed, deliver excellent customer service, and to collaborate with stakeholders and other DHSS agencies to meet our mission of promoting health, well-being and safety for individuals by facilitating access to quality services.

The Quality Assurance Unit is responsible for the following activities:

- Case Record Review of Medicaid Waiver Participants
- Critical Incident Report Review, Investigations, Remediation and Reporting
- Mortality Review, Investigations, and Reporting
- Investigation of participant related complaints and noncompliance
- Critical Incident Report (CIR) Investigation as related to system compliance
- Quality Monitoring Reporting for system improvement activities

All providers receiving Title III funding are required to conduct customer satisfaction surveys annually as part of their quality monitoring. A performance target of 80 percent of consumers being satisfied with services must be maintained. In addition to quarterly financial oversight and reporting requirements, all providers receive on-site reviews at least once per three-year grant cycle by SDS program managers.

Implementation

The performance measures in this plan track outcomes that indicate progress towards the six goals. Data related to the utilization of funding described in this plan is updated annually as part of the Alaska Commission on Aging's Annual Report. The State Plan for Senior Services Advisory Committee 2020-2023 (listed in Appendix F) aims to convene two implementation meetings during the 2020-2023 planning period. The purpose of this meeting will be to update the performance measures, review progress towards the goals and adjust any objectives or strategies. The Advisory Committee will also revisit the funding formula during one of these implementation meetings. Following this plan, the Alaska Commission on Aging will develop a funding formula sub-committee including members from all census areas of the state to begin working on revisions as soon as this plan is approved.

